METEOROLOGICAL SOCIETY.

Tuesday, March 14.—*Anniversary Meeting.*

The Right Hon. Lord Robert Grosvenor, President, in the chair.

After the minutes of the last meeting had been read and confirmed, the Right Honourable the EARL SPENCER was elected a member.

The Treasurer read the annual report of the council to the society, from which it appeared that greater zeal for the welfare of the society had been manifested during the past session on the part not only of the officers, but of the members generally, as several donations had been made to the funds of the society by the friends to meteorological science. The society now numbers 134 members, of whom 65 are contributing members, 59 associates in foreign parts, and 10 honorary members.

The Secretary next read two short papers from J. H. Mandly, Esq., of the Royal Academy, Gosport: 1st, on a grand display of meteors, with an accompanying *Aurora Borealis*, on the night of August 9th, 1842; 2nd, a representation of two solar halos, a large intersecting circle, five inverted arches, and five parhelia about the sun, July 12th, 1842.

The Treasurer, in making his annual address to the society, produced a complete epitome of meteorology, shewing the great amount of good arising to every student of natural phenomena. He called upon medical men especially to watch narrowly the diseases of the human frame in connection with the various changes of the weather, saying, "I would impress upon the attention of all medical gentlemen who may be either members of the society or correspondents, the great importance to science in general of introducing into their meteorological registers as full an account as possible of the existing diseases; such registers being among the most interesting and valuable documents.

The Treasurer produced a list of meteorological queries, and supposing a locality, gave the meteorological answers, with a view of obtaining simultaneous observations, and of ascertaining the effects of locality on the human family. With these helps, "we can safely take some effectual steps towards an acquaintance with atmospheric changes which directly or indirectly affect all animal and vegetable life, and more particularly with the order in which they succeed each other. Provided with this knowledge, we may often be able to anticipate them, and timely prepare to meet or diminish their injurious influence, or take the greatest advantage of opportunities which may be propitious to the increase of the subsistence, wealth, and happiness of the community."

The Treasurer then called the attention of members to united efforts, and continued—"It is indeed difficult to say what mighty problems might not be solved, and how many of the present unexplained and mysterious workings of nature might not be unravelled. Of all the works of the Creator, the most beautiful, the most wonderful, and the most useful, is the air or atmosphere with which the surface of the earth is everywhere covered; the phenomena, which are so universal and so indispensable in the economy of nature, must well repay the labour of every one who may have the good fortune to study them; and that human being who can remain ignorant upon such a subject can have small claims indeed to rationality." The report concluded by calling upon the members to be strenuously united in their efforts to unravel the mysteries of nature in the atmosphere.

The officers for the ensuing session were then elected, viz.—

President—The Right Hon. Lord Robert Grosvenor, M.P.

Vice-Presidents — Dr. Lee, F.R.S., &c., and George Leach, Esq., F.Z.S.

Treasurer—J. G. Gutch, Esq., M.R.C.S.

Secretaries—W. W. White, Esq., M.B.S., and P. L. Simmonds, Esq., F.S.S.

Foreign Secretary—John Reynolds, Esq., M.B.S.

Other members of the council—The Right Hon. Lord Carington, Messrs. Casella, Denton, Legh, Phillips, Platt, Parker, Renchitti, and Major Stock, K.H.

The meeting then adjourned.

SCULPTURE AND ARCHITECTURE.

At the latter end of his (Flaxman's) career the royal favour promised him a wider field of exertion, and a nobler foundation for his well-earned fame; but the nation and the government, as bodies, were alike indifferent to his talents or the glory of encouraging them; and the people possess none of his works, except his monuments in the churches. Among these, the most remarkable are the monuments of Nelson, Howe, and Sir Joshua Reynolds, in St. Paul's; of Lord Mansfield and John Kemble, in Westminster Abbey. Had England possessed a Pericles, she might in her Flaxman have found a Phidias: but George III. had no idea of sculpture; and his successor, though well-inclined towards the arts, from his munificent and somewhat fastidious spirit, was miserably devoid of taste. In his reign much was done and spent; and had equal pains been taken to do well and lay out wisely, architecture and sculpture would have advanced indeed. To work for St. Paul's, in memory of the heroes of his country, was now the privilege of the English sculptor; but opportunity and inspiration were controlled by narrow views and limited means: few works possessing a character of true greatness are found within those walls. The real cause of this failure was, perhaps, the absence of all foresight and confidence on the part of those at whose disposal were the national monuments. Had such a man as Flaxman been engaged to form a grand plan which should be gradually carried out, for the adornment of St. Paul's, and the commemoration of the war and our victories, the pettiness and absurdities which degrade both might have been avoided. Had not the Capella Sistini been placed at the disposal of Michael Angelo, that boast of modern art would never have existed: but example is lost upon us. The absence of any edile power—the want, perhaps, of a minister of public works in England, prevents, in great measure, the development of any grand idea. What we resolve to do is done at once by individual means: and the steady pursuit—for long years, and under changing governments—of one established plan, either in architecture or the sister arts, is barely known. Lately, a better spirit has arisen in street architecture, which will doubtless have its effect on sculpture; but, to insure the accomplishment of any great work, the supremacy of one directing mind must never be disputed. Had Sir Christopher Wren been allowed to carry out his plan of improvements in the city,—and, still more, had he lived later with that power, every year adding its portion to the pre-arranged work, and every new erection happily subordinate to the general effect,—the many pleasing parts would have tended to one magnificent whole, which would now have been developing its beauty. So, in the sculptures of St. Paul's, he want of pre-arrangement and general design has reduced the monuments to a multitude of unconnected statues and incongruous ideas, instead of each illustrating the other, and all blending in one great and harmonious design. The relievos, dedicated to the recital of certain parts of the history respectively; the groups assigned to their appropriate places, and connecting links established between statue and statue; a distinct portion reserved for the eminent in the arts of peace; and the naval separated from the military, of those whose glory was in deeds of war; a settled and consistent costume; established and expressive symbols; the studied incatenation of inscriptions; and the observance of that order, which, without forcing sameness or uniformity on the separate statues, or in any way binding down the spirit of the individual artist, would have secured an harmonious whole, and made each part powerfully to aid the general effect:—such were the precautions, the neglect of which has destroyed capabilities unrivalled in Europe. This waste of the means of greatness is unreasonably visited on the artist, but it is due to the indifference of government and the opposition of churchmen, who, in other countries the patrons of the arts, were here unfortunately opposed, on principle, to their progress. The erection of a national monument in architecture, with an express view to the disposal of sculpture, to contain statues, &c. of the heroes by sea and land who, during the last war, raised the name of England high among the nations, was contemplated at the right time, but the government preferred to spend as much money on fireworks and Chinese pagodas as would by this time have gone far towards the expenses of such an erection. Had that monument been erected, the interior of St. Paul's might have been dedicated to more appropriate memories than those of battle. A Howard, a Johnson, a Reynolds, and the pious Heber, are all the monuments of this class. Jenner, Watt, Wilberforce (as embodying an idea); Newton, the educators, humanisers, peacemakers, and benefactors of the country and mankind, should be remembered in marble; within the metropolitan church, at the expense of the nation.

The opportunity of establishing these national monuments was certainly at the close of the war, and Flaxman was well qualified to have designed them. This was a happy period for the foundation of a great work, and for the commencement of a school which ought to carry English sculpture to its desired place. The originality and vigour of his mind, which rose in proportion to the demands on them, only required scope and stimulus. Such a field would have fired with a noble enthusiasm, and have elevated his soul to the noblest heights. The immediate commerce with foreign countries by the most distinguished men of our own had created a taste for sculpture which began to be better understood. Banks had shewn that English genius was not uncultivable; Flaxman had proved himself equal to his contemporaries on the Continent—equal in hand and eye, and superior in power and sentiment. Canova then, and Thorwaldsen since, could alone compete with Flaxman; for, with some splendid exceptions, mediocrity is the mark of our time rather than of our country: a fact the more remarkable, as this may be considered the peculiar period of science, not only in research but in diffusion.

MARQUETTRY.

A curious species of work composed of different coloured pieces of hard fine wood, fastened, in thin layers, on a ground, and occasionally enriched with other matters, such as tortoise-shell, ivory, tin, or brass. There is a separate kind of marquettry made, instead of wood, of glasses of various colours; and another still, wherein nothing is used but precious stones and the richest marbles: but these are more properly denominated mosaic-work.

The art of inlaying is very ancient, and has been supposed to have passed from the east to the west, as one of the spoils brought by the Romans from Asia. Indeed it was at that time executed with great simplicity, nor did it reach even a tolerable degree of excellence till the fifteenth century, among the Italians.

Until John of Verona, who flourished at the same time with Raffaelle, the finest works of this kind were only black and white, such as we call Moresques; but that devotee, who possessed some genius for the fine arts, stained his wood with dyed or boiled oils, which penetrated them. He proceeded no farther, however, than the representing of buildings and perspectives, which require no great variety of colours. They who succeeded him not only improved on the invention of dyeing the woods, by a secret, which they discovered, of burning them without consuming (which served particularly well for the shadowing), but they had likewise the advantage of several fine new woods of naturally bright colours, which were imported from the newly discovered continent of America. With these assistances, the art is now capable of imitating almost any thing.

The ground whereon the pieces are to be ranged and glued is ordinarily of oak, or fir well dried; and, to prevent warping, it is composed of several pieces glued together. The wood to be used, being reduced into leaves, of the thickness of a line, is either stained with some colour, or made black for shadow, which some effect, by putting it in sand, extremely heated over the fire, others, by steeping it in lime-water and sublimate. Thus coloured, the contours of the pier are formed according to the parts of the design they are to represent. This last is the most difficult part of marquettry, and that wherein most patience and attention are requisite.—*Elmes's Dictionary of the Fine Arts.*

The Cambridge Camden Society have been empowered to provide degrees for two new churches; one at Maresfield, Sussex, the other at Whitstable, Kent.